

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Seong Hong, and I am a graduating medical student at Yale Medical School.

I stand in support of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare they need.

I am here today because I feel that it is my moral duty to do so. I grew up undocumented in New York City, where I was given health insurance despite my status. What that meant was that I was allowed to remain a child in this aspect of life. I never had to worry about the doctor's bill when I had a childhood illness. Instead, I was well looked after and healthy enough to the best that I could in all things. As a result of my debt to NYS, I took away two things. The first is that medical care is one of the best ways to remove barrier. Right to health is as basic and integral as right to shelter. This is why I became a physician. The second lesson was that, growing up, I was acutely aware of the great gift that New York State had given me. As a teen, I thought long and hard about how I could pay this forward, and so began my decades long involvement in justice work and serving neglected, underserved patients. Yet another argument FOR expanding HUSKY is that healthcare is one of the best ways to invest in children. Regardless of our opinion on the parents' mode of migration, the fact is that these undocumented children will stay. We are the only home they'd ever known. And how can we expect these children to become a functioning, contributing, and kind members of society if they are in pain from complications of a preventable illness, or without access to mental health care. These children need to be healthy first to become the best versions of themselves. For themselves and for our society. Please consider investing in Connecticut's next generation, and make the morally clear choice in expanding HUSKY. Thank you.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,
Seong Im Hong